

NMFS Policy Directive Writing Tips

- Follow the guidance outlined in NMFSI 30-101-01.
- Keep the narrative in policy directives short and concise. Write only what needs to be written.
- Give a clear description of the purpose of the policy directive. Keep it to the point.
- Write in the active voice, not the passive voice.
- Ask yourself if the average person can read and understand the document.
- Ensure the document can “stand alone” and be understood without the need to refer to other documents.
- When writing policy directives, use the statements provided in sections 4.3 and 4.5 of Appendix A of NMFSI 30-101-01:
 - This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities.
 - This policy directive is supported by the references and glossary of terms listed in Attachment 1.
- Identify the role and responsibilities of each unit within the NMFS. When doing this, ask yourself:
 - How is each unit different?
 - If there are no differences in roles and responsibilities, do I need to list them?
 - Is each description clear and concise?
- Avoid negative or quantitative terms (e.g., many, some, few, seldom, frequently).
- List all references made to other publications in the body of the policy directive in the Appendices.
- Make sure text flows on to the signature page so the Director’s signature does not stand alone on the page.
- If there is a legal requirement for a particular action or wording, provide the citation (e.g., “Pursuant to Public Law xx-xxx...”)